

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: COUNTY FACILITIES

DATE: MAY 27, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GIRARD
WOOD
WESTCOTT
MONROE
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

JEFFERY TENNYSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
FRANK MOREHOUSE, SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS
ROSS DUBARRY, AIRPORT MANAGER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS SEEGER
SIMPSON
TAYLOR
RICH SCHERMERHORN, SCHERMERHORN AVIATION/RICH AIR/FIXED BASE
OPERATOR
JON LAPPER, LEGAL COUNSEL FOR SCHERMERHORN AVIATION/RICH AIR
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
JAMES CATILLAZ, ENLIGHTEN POWER SOLUTIONS
NICK PASCO, ENLIGHTEN POWER SOLUTIONS
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Girard called the meeting of the County Facilities Committee to order at 10:01 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Frank Morehouse, Superintendent of Buildings, who distributed copies of the agenda packet to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Morehouse informed he was currently assessing the available space in the Human Services Building (HSB) to designate a location for the New York State Department of Labor (NYS DOL) and Employment & Training Administration (ETA) Offices. He advised it was necessary to place the two offices together and he pointed out that revenue would be generated from rents paid by the State and Federal Governments for the office space. He apprised it would be necessary to find space to accommodate 25 employees and it might be necessary to consolidate or re-locate offices of existing personnel located within the HSB. He advised he would continue to develop a plan to locate the NYS DOL and ETA Offices together in the HSB and would present it to the Committee for approval at a future meeting.

Mr. Girard commented the current offices of the NYS DOL and ETA were located at Northway Plaza and he asked about the possibility of them terminating their current lease agreement. Mr. Morehouse responded the current lease would expire in January of 2015. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, interjected he believed the current lease expired on December 31, 2014 and he noted that Mr. Morehouse was looking for the support of the Committee to proceed with the development of a plan. He said it might be necessary to rearrange some of the existing offices in order to accommodate the needs of the NYS DOL and ETA Offices. He reiterated there would be revenue generated through rents paid by the State and Federal Governments for the office space. Mr. Monroe asked about the amount of the rent and Mr. Dusek responded the amount needed to be negotiated but would be substantial. Mr. Dusek explained the ETA received Federal funding for rental

of office space and the NYS DOL received State funding for same. Mr. Monroe opined the term of the lease should be reasonable to allow the County options in the future and Mr. Dusek agreed and said the lease would most likely be for three years. Mr. Girard asked that Mr. Morehouse visit the current offices to determine the activity and traffic levels for the NYS DOL and ETA Offices. Mr. Morehouse acknowledged there would be some traffic issues and he pointed out the possibility of rearranging the employee parking situation for the HSB.

Mr. Westcott inquired if Mr. Morehouse would return to the Committee once a plan had been developed and Mr. Morehouse replied that he would. Mr. Westcott asked if the necessary space was available within the HSB and Mr. Morehouse replied affirmatively. Mr. Morehouse apprised it would be necessary to plan out the details because there were 25 employees, plus interview rooms and waiting rooms to be considered. Mr. Westcott asked if New York State would cover the costs of any necessary renovations and Mr. Morehouse replied in the negative. Mr. Morehouse said there was a possibility the State would approve a maintenance in lieu of rent situation similar to the agreement with the Courts. He explained he did not anticipate a large amount of renovations would be necessary, as the NYS DOL and ETA currently utilized cubicles for their employees. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Morehouse informed the renovations for the new Human Resources and Civil Service Office space were going well. He said the Civil Service Office would be relocated to the new office space on May 28, 2014. He explained the current Civil Service Office would then be converted into a new Conference Room and once that was completed work would commence on the Human Resources Conference Room.

Mr. Morehouse apprised that a Buildings & Grounds employee had patterns for the construction of Adirondack chairs and was currently constructing a few of these for the Veterans' Services Flag Pole area to allow for a park-like setting with a small seating area.

Pertaining to the pending item concerning a cost estimate for the potential restructuring of the main entrance to the Municipal Center, Mr. Morehouse recommended this be deleted from the pending items list. He advised the possible restructuring of the main entrance to the Municipal Center would be considered when the future Court renovations were completed. He said he was still looking into the possibility of making the Department of Motor Vehicles entrance the main entrance to the Municipal Center and possibly downsizing the current front entrance.

Mr. Girard stated he had spoken with Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), about the possibility of a collaborative effort with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) for solar power conversion. Mr. Tennyson said he had coordinated with Clark Patterson Lee to develop a scope of work which would look at all of the major County facilities and different technologies to be reviewed from a feasibility standpoint. Regarding the solar power for CCE, Countryside Adult Home, Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Town of Warrensburg for solar well sites, he continued, they could look into a separate initiative. He advised some of the local municipalities had elected to enter into a PPA (power purchase agreement) where a private company would install the necessary equipment and panels. He added with a PPA, the initial outlay was covered by the company and the municipality experienced a reduced electricity rate.

Mr. Strough entered the Meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Another possibility, Mr. Tennyson continued, would be for the County to undertake a Capital Project; bond the necessary funds; install the equipment and panels; and assume the maintenance costs.

He explained the difference was that undertaking the Capital Project would mean the County would recoup all of the savings, whereas a PPA offered a reduced rate to the municipalities while the company reaped the majority of the savings. He stated if the Committee wanted to undertake a separate initiative for the CCE Campus, he could gather more information and return to the Committee with some options to proceed to a Request for Proposal (RFP) Process or some other action for an installation to commence in the fall.

Mr. Girard asked if any of the Supervisors had been involved with solar projects and could add some insights. Mr. Monroe stated the project could be completed quickly and the Town of Chester's experience had been positive. He agreed with Mr. Tennyson that the savings would be greater if the County completed all of the work but he felt it was a major benefit to have no capital outlay and have an outside company complete all the work. Mr. Girard asked if these companies would maintain the system and Mr. Monroe replied affirmatively. Mr. Monroe said the municipality paid a reduced power rate and he noted the Town of Chester received a 25% savings for buildings which had not previously been on a demand meter; 20% if the building was on demand meter and 10% for all other buildings. He stated the solar power companies now offered virtual net metering and he explained that before this option was available it was required that the solar panels be placed within 400 feet of the building. Mr. Monroe apprised two of the Town of Chester buildings with solar power, produced more electricity than was needed in the summer months which resulted in credits for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Strough said the Town of Queensbury had looked into several different arrangements for solar power, including PPA's. He advised that companies, such as Monolith Solar, offered guaranteed savings and he noted the benefits were dependent on the verbiage of the contracts. Mr. Strough explained the Town of Queensbury's agreement with Monolith Solar was a PPA in which they purchased electricity from the company who took all of the responsibility and liability. He said the solar panels belonged to Monolith Solar and the contract included a clause which required the company to remove and replace solar panels in the event that construction was required on the building. He stated Monolith Solar had determined the average cost of electricity for the Town of Queensbury and based on that average the Town was charged 75%. He expressed the real savings with a PPA was that the power was purchased through the solar panels and the municipalities were not charged delivery fees or taxes for their electricity usage.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Monroe said he felt the County should pursue the concept of solar power which would result in savings. He added the projects could be completed in a timely manner and he pointed out the Town of Chester had met with the company in September, signed the contract in October and received their first reduced electricity bill in December. Mr. Strough stated the conversion to solar power was good for public relations and he noted Monolith Solar had installed a 40" monitor at the entrance of the Queensbury Town Hall which displayed details on the amount saved by using solar power. Mr. Simpson advised the Town of Horicon had also contracted with Monolith Solar and was experiencing significant savings on electricity. Mr. Monroe informed the use of solar power during the months of April and May generated the greatest savings.

Mr. Westcott apprised this sounded like a great opportunity for Warren County and he asked if the next step would be to start negotiations with a solar power company. Mr. Monroe suggested it would be important to consider the term of the contract as new technologies continued to be developed. Mr. Strough pointed out the contract between the Town of Queensbury and Monolith Solar stated the contract terms would be re-negotiated after ten years. Mr. Monroe noted the Town of Chester also had a ten year contract with Monolith Solar.

Mr. Girard asked if it would be possible to present further information at the next Committee Meeting. Mr. Tennyson said he would summarize the experiences of the Towns that had switched to solar power along with the options available to the County. He advised it would be unwise to proceed with an RFP for a PPA for solar power without reviewing all of the options. He mentioned he had been contacted by solar power companies requesting their ability to present proposals for the County. He anticipated there would be several responses to the RFP process. Mr. Strough pointed out it was a competitive market for solar power which would be to the advantage of the County. Mr. Tennyson admitted there were pros and cons to each option but it was important to summarize the options before determining how to proceed. Mr. Monroe stated one of the first decisions the County needed to make was to determine if they wanted to go with a PPA or finance the equipment and panels as a Capital Project. He noted there were many risks with financing the equipment and panels which would be eliminated with a PPA. He added there were risks with a PPA, as the County would be relying on a company which could go bankrupt or incur some other type of problem which would effect the continuation of the contract. He admitted there were fewer risks with a PPA but also fewer savings. Mr. Westcott asked if there was a particular season which was recommended for installation of solar power panels and Mr. Monroe replied if the panels were ground or pole mounted the company would want to install before the winter. Mr. Girard advised that CCE needed to install solar panels prior to the winter and the sooner it was completed the sooner they would start saving money. Mr. Monroe advised the County should also look into biomass heating which would save 45% on fuel costs and he noted the State was working on the Governor's initiative for renewable heat in New York State and grant programs were expected to be available by August.

This concluded the Buildings & Grounds portion of the Committee Meeting and the Airport portion of the Meeting commenced at 10:30 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ross Dubarry, Airport Manager, who distributed copies of the agenda packet to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Dubarry stated the first item was to receive a presentation from Rich Schermerhorn, Fixed Base Operator (FBO), regarding a proposal for a stand alone office building on Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport property. Mr. Dubarry pointed out conceptual drawings for the proposed office building were included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Schermerhorn said his proposal was to construct a stand alone office building next to one of the larger hangars. He advised his intention would be to find a tenant for the office building which would be Airport related, such as a flight school or corporation currently occupying one of the hangars. He stated the design of the office building would be similar to that of the stand alone restaurant and would blend in with the existing buildings at the Airport. He noted water and sewer infrastructure for the office building were already in place as they had been completed during the construction of the larger hangars. He pointed out the construction plans included a pressure treated wooden foot bridge which ran over a drainage ditch system. He advised this would be a new building which would be heated with propane although he mentioned he would try to convert the heating to natural gas. He stated he would commence construction immediately and simultaneously with the construction of the stand alone restaurant.

Mr. Westcott asked for clarification if the intention was to construct the stand alone office building on spec and then find a tenant and Mr. Schermerhorn replied affirmatively. Mr. Schermerhorn mentioned he had been approached in the past by people who required an office building on Airport property. He said the office building could be used by a flight school, a corporate flight department or a charter company. Mr. Westcott pointed out the plans included in the agenda packet did not

include interior walls and Mr. Schermerhorn responded his intention was to leave the interior empty and build to suit the tenant's needs. Mr. Schermerhorn mentioned the possibility of dividing the building into two smaller offices. Mr. Strough said the office building was a good idea and he pointed out Mr. Schermerhorn would assume all of the risks and there would be a benefit to the community. Mr. Schermerhorn admitted he took calculated risks but he noted when a building was already constructed it was easier to find a tenant.

Mr. Schermerhorn reported the T-hangars were almost all occupied and a Certificate of Occupancy was anticipated on the last T-hangar within the next two weeks. He said once all of the paperwork was completed on the restaurant ground lease, he would commence construction. Mr. Schermerhorn opined the construction of the stand alone restaurant and stand alone office building would enhance the initiative to improve the Airport. Mr. Strough asked if Mr. Schermerhorn would be responsible for all necessary maintenance for the restaurant and office building and Mr. Schermerhorn replied affirmatively. Mr. Schermerhorn stated both buildings would be all new construction using energy efficient materials. Mr. Girard asked for a time table for construction and Mr. Schermerhorn responded he was ready to break ground as soon as the ground leases and legal details were completed. Mr. Westcott stated he was not familiar with the lease terms and asked if he could have a copy of the agreement. Mr. Dusek replied the lease agreement had not yet been negotiated. Mr. Girard stated that conceptual approval of the construction of a stand alone office building was necessary in order to proceed.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the conceptual design for the construction of a stand alone office building on Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport property as proposed by Rich Air and authorizing negotiations between the County and Rich Air of terms for a ground lease for same. *The necessary resolution was authorized for the June 20, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Mr. Dubarry pointed out a letter from the New York State Department of Transportation was included in the agenda packet and informed of the availability of \$7 million in capital funding to maintain and modernize commercial and general aviation facilities in the State. He said last year he had applied for grant funding for a natural gas distribution system and he would like to reapply for that this year without the inclusion of the generator. He noted that following discussions with the consultant it was determined the cost of a natural gas system would be approximately \$500,000. He added he had scheduled a meeting with representatives from National Grid for Thursday, May 29, 2014 to request their assistance with the costs associated with the natural gas line installation. Mr. Dubarry advised the Airport could submit two grant applications although it was made clear that only one, if any, would not be funded. He stated he wanted to apply for grant funding for upgrades to the aviation fuel farm. He explained that both tanks required replacement, as there were maintenance concerns and the tanks were approaching the end of their life span. He said the fuel tanks were owned by the County and were leased to the FBO. He apprised he wanted to bring the fuel farm up to standards for fire safety and spill prevention. He noted the grant application for this project would be for \$550,000. Ms. Seeber asked if any matching funds were required for this grant program and Mr. Dubarry replied there was a 10% local match requirement.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of two grant applications to the New York State Department of Transportation, NY Works Program in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 for the installation of a natural gas distribution system; and in an amount not to exceed \$550,000 for upgrades to the aviation fuel farm. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the June 20, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Mr. Dubarry said the last item on the agenda was an update for the Runway 1 Obstruction Removal Project. He informed the contractor had resumed work including stump removal, grubbing and clearing. He noted the last page of the agenda packet contained the revised planting plan. He explained the highlighted area of the plan reflected the area where the size of the trees had been increased from the original plan. Mr. Girard commented that former Supervisor Ron Montesi wanted to know the condition of how the grounds would be left. Mr. Dubarry explained those areas would all be graded smooth and would be hydro-seeded to look like the existing field. Mr. Westcott mentioned that more grass coverage at the Airport would equate to additional mowing. He asked if the additional annual cost of mowing had been calculated and Mr. Dubarry replied in the negative. Mr. Monroe stated he was unsure what area they were discussing and Mr. Westcott replied it was along Queensbury Avenue. Mr. Tennyson stated the areas would be mowed in lieu of future clearing or topping of trees. He pointed out the concerns of one of the homeowners, the Kilmartin's, had been addressed. He advised they had met with the Kilmartin's on May 16, 2014 and had reviewed a more comprehensive plan which included trees to be planted to the north and south of the Kilmartin's property line; however, he continued, the Kilmartin's had decided they liked the view and requested no trees be planted to the north and south of their property line. He said the additional cost of the plantings and the upgrade in the tree sizes would be covered under the existing grant for the project, as the project had come in slightly under budget. Mr. Westcott thanked Mr. Tennyson for resolving the Kilmartin's concerns to their satisfaction.

As there was no further business to come before the County Facilities Committee, on motion made by Mr. Monroe and seconded by Ms. Wood, Mr. Girard adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist